



March 7, 2019

City of Ontario

Office of the Mayor

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House Speaker Tina Kotek
Senate President Peter Courtney
Governor Kate Brown

My name is Riley Hill, and I am the Mayor of Ontario. Please consider the negative impacts Ontario is facing now, and what Cap & Trade will do to us.

Malheur County is the poorest county in the State of Oregon. It has its own unique set of circumstances, particularly, Ontario, Vale, Nyssa, and Adrian, separated from Idaho by the Snake River. I have been a resident for forty-seven years. Ontario was once a vibrant, growing, prosperous community, but now is failing and falling victim to Idaho.

Three or four years ago, Jim Rue visited Ontario. We insisted that he take a tour through Fruitland, Idaho, Nyssa, Oregon, and back into Ontario. We showed him six businesses that had left Oregon and crossed into Idaho. Since then, a tractor/implement business and two car dealerships have moved to Fruitland, Idaho. We have lost our golf course, closed our swimming pool, and many primary businesses, that have moved to Idaho from Ontario. Now, a new hospital has been built in Fruitland. Almost nothing is being built in Ontario or Malheur County, while one mile away, Fruitland and Payette, Idaho are thriving.

Idaho has a lower income tax rate, lower property tax rates, lower estate tax rates, and lower power rates. Idaho has land use laws that are easy to deal with. We can't compete. Couple this with the fact that Oregon has more beneficial welfare benefits for those in need, than does Idaho. Ontario gets the people in need; Fruitland and Payette get the affluent.

The Cap and Trade bill will build on the unfair disadvantage that rural Oregon already has. We have to drive long distances. This is not a choice. There will be more businesses that leave the state, resulting in more jobs lost: Love's Truck Stop, Pilot Truck Stop, some family owned mini-marts, Ore-Ida will leave instead of expanding, Ash Grove Cement plant in Durkee, Eagle Picher Minerals in Vale. There will be more need for the Department of Human Services.

The Cap and Trade bill will have the opposite effect that Oregonians espouse: diversity, inclusiveness, equity; and will create a polarizing effect: Fruitland with the HAVES and Ontario with the HAVE NOTS. The Cap and Trade bill will devastate Ontario and the surrounding agricultural communities. Please help us!

I leave you with Senator Courtney's message, "One size does not fit all."

Sincerely,